In the history of religion mother worship occupied a prominent place. The antiquity of mother worship in India dates back to Harappan civilization. The discovery of several terracotta female divinities testifies this fact. The Aryans also gave priority to the worship of mother goddesses. Later on during historical period Devi worship got wide acclamation due to the patronage of liberal kings. They used to build several temples for worship of the supreme goddesses like Parvati and Durga. In course of time many Sakta rituals and festivals have been created for the spread of Saktism. Later on many religious texts based on Shakti or Devi were written during medieval period. Till today Devi worship continues in full swing during Dassehra Festival held in the month of October.

Among these goddesses Kali is the first and most important Mahavidya. Literally Kali means "Dark-complexioned One". According to Mahabhagavata Purana, Kali as a Mahavidya originated from the fury of Devi Sati to terrify Lord Šiva. According to Saktisangama Tantra, the Mahavidyas are linked with ten Bhairavas. In this way Kali is linked with 'Mahakala Bhairava'. Kali is also known as Ratri Devi or Kalaratri.

Legend has it, that after her fight with Mahisasura, Devi Durga became extremely angry and took the ferocious dark complexioned form, assumed short height and began to walk on the ground. This form of Devi came to be known as Kali. With lolling out tongue, she started dancing blindly. The gods and people in extreme fear appealed Šiva for help. Lord Siva realising the gravity of the situation lay himself down on the way on which the ferocious naked Kali was coming. In her blind fury the Devi could not see him and stepped on his chest. On the very moment Siva's linga became erect and entered Kali's body. At that time Kali recognised her husband Lord Siva and pulled out her tongue in shame. This description of Kali engaged in reverse copulation with Lord Siva became very popular in texts and iconography. According to these texts her Dhyanas have been created. The above mentioned description confirms the iconography of Daksina Kali which is very popular.
Antiquity of Goddess Kali

Kali is regarded as one of the famous deities in India. The earliest reference of Kali can be found in the *Mundak Upanishad*. "Kali karalika manojabhaca sulohitaya ca sudhumra varna sphulingini visvarupa ca Devi lolayamanaiti saptajihva". The Vedic literature associates Kali with another ferocious goddess Nirtti as both of them are dark complexioned. But during post-Vedic period Nirtti lost her popularity and Kali rose to prominence. According to scholars Kali is the later form of Vedic goddess Nirtti. The great epic *Mahabharata* also depicts about Kali. Goddess Chamunda is referred as Kali in the famous *Durgasaptasati*. It is to note that earlier in Hinduism Kali was not regarded as an important deity, but later on she is considered as a form of Durga. In *Agni Purana* and *Garuda Purana*, Kali is described as the furious aspect of Durga and worshipped for winning wars. It is also described that she resides in the cremation ground wearing a garland to skulls. Jadabharata worshipped Kali as the tutelary deity of the bandits. The famous text *Silapadhikaranam* of South India has described her as the goddess of death worshipped by the bandits. The *Kinasariya Stone Inscription* of Cacca dated 999 A.D. referred about Kali in her terrific form. In the Oriya *Ramayana* written by Balaram Das in the 15th c. A.D. vivid description about Kali occurs. In *Shyamasaparyavidhi* written by Kasinath in the year 1699 A.D., the first reference of Kali worship occurred.

Kali worship is prevalent in whole India but it is very popular in eastern part (mostly in Bengal and coastal Orissa), next to the worship of Durga. She is worshipped both at home in her benevolent aspect and in shrines with tantric rituals. Besides daily worship at shrines Goddess Kali is specially worshipped on the day of ‘Dipavali’. Her *Vija-mantra* is *krim*. It is to be noted that animal sacrifice is a special feature during the worship of Kali. The present form of Kali worship is mainly based upon three texts namely *Kali Tantra*, *Tantrasara* and *Shyamarahasya*.

Various Forms of Kali

Devi Kali’s position was raised to a greater height by several *Tantra Sastras*. According to *Tulaja Tantra*, Devi’s well known forms are eight, such as Daksina Kali, Siddhi Kali, Guhya Kali, Sri Kali, Bhadra Kali, Chamunda Kali, Smasana Kali and Mahakali. The *Mahakali Samhita* give the names of nine Kalis, such as - Daksina Kali, Bhadra Kali, Smasana Kali, Kalalaki, Guhya Kali, Kamakali, Dhana Kali, Chandi Kali. The text *Tantraloka* written by Abhinavagupta mentions about thirteen forms, such as : Kalisri Kali, Samhara Kali, Sthiti Kali, Rakta Kali, Sukali, Yama Kali, Mrityu Kali, Rudra or Bhadra Kali (concert of Virabhadra), Paramaraka Kali, Martanda Kali, Kalagni Rudra Kali, Mahakali, and Mahabhairavaghorchanda Kali. The nine forms of Kali are described in the *Tantrasara* and *Agamatatvavilasa* of Raghunatha are as follows : Daksina Kali, Maha Kali, Smasana Kali, Guhya Kali, Bhadrakali, Chamunda Kali, Siddha Kali, Hamsa Kali and Kamakali Kali.

Kali in Orissan Art

Though Kali is regarded as an important deity in *Sakta* pantheon, but her images came into existence only from 15th c. A.D. onwards when *Dasamahavidya* worship gained popularity. Kali images are less depicted in temple walls in comparison to Mahisamardini images. It is noteworthy that after the completion of deplastering work of Jagannath temple at Puri, an image of Kali came to limelight. She serves as an Avarana-devata. The image is carved on the western side on the south-west corner in the upper Angasikhara
of the Vimana. The image is partially eroded. Here goddess Kali is seen standing in Pratyalidha pose. She has dishevelled hair and wears a garland of skull. She holds a sword and an indistinct object (possibly severed human head) in her right and left hands respectively. Her image is flanked by attendants. Perhaps this is the earliest Kali image as an Avarana devata in Orissan temple. Another image is located in the premises of Dhavalesvara Siva temple near Cuttack. Here Devi is seated in Lalita pose on a lotus under which a corpse can be seen. In her principal right hand she holds a rosary and holds a sword by her uplifted back hand. Her right middle arm as well as all the left arms are broken. She wears a Kirita-mukuta and possesses a third eye. In later examples when Kali images are standardised, many new things are added. A four-armed Kali image can be noticed in an exterior niche of the Samalai temple at Sonepur. Here Kali is depicted in dancing pose on a corpse. She holds a Kartri and a sword by her right hands while she holds a Kapala by her uplifted back right hand. She has placed her left hand in the neck of a standing figure, who is Urdhvalinga. She possesses dishevelled hair and wears Patra-kundala.

As a Parsva-devata, the images of Kali appeared from 10th c.A.D. onwards. For example the image of Kali as a Parsva-devata appear on the ruined Bhimesvari temple at Pedagadi, dated to late 10th c.A.D. In the compound of Samalai temple at Sambalpur a rare example of eight handed Kali can be noticed. She is seen seated in Vajraparyankasana on a lotus pedestal. Her front right and left hands hold a mace and a small pot while her other right hands are seen holding a rosary, trident and a sword. The remaining left hands hold a skull filled with severed human head, an indistinct object and a shield. She possesses dishevelled hair. Another image is found at the base of the back Rahapaga of the Baliharachandi temple near Puri. Here Kali holds a serpent. She holds a skull and a severed head by her left hands. She stands in Alidha pose on the body of Lord Siva who is Urdhvalinga. Images of Kali as Parsva-devata are found in places like Palur in Ganjam district, Bhagavati temple at Sonepur, in the Jagamohana of Samalai temple at Sonepur, Bausani temple in Phulbani district, Daksinachandi temple at Kantilo etc.

Goddess Kali as a presiding deity can be seen in several shrines of Orissa. In the compound of Kosalesvara temple at Badakanjia in Puri district a two-armed image of Kali is worshipped as Rudrani. She is seen seated in Lalita pose on a corpse. She holds a sword over her head by her right hand while her left hand holds a severed head. She wears a garland of skull. On stylistic ground this image belongs to 16th/17th c.A.D. Another image is located near the Lankesvari temple at Junagar, who is known as Bhubanesvari. She possesses four hands and is seen dancing on a corpse. She holds a severed head and a sword in her lower right and uplifted hands while her other corresponding hands hold a noose and a skull. One rare image of Devi is noticed in a small temple at Laksminarayanapur in Cuttack district. She possesses four-arms and stands on Lord Siva's body. She displays Abhayamudra and Varadamudra by her uplifted right and lower hands, while she holds a sword (now not in situ) and a severed head by her uplifted left hand and lower hand respectively. In the Mangala temple at Kakatpur, Kali is seen standing in Alidha pose on the prostrate body of Siva. Devi's right hands show Varada and Abhaya mudras while her left hands displays a sword and severed head. She also wears a skull garland. The prostrate body of Siva is depicted with Urdvalinga pose here. The above description confirms the Dhyana of Daksina Kali.
Goddess Kali is also depicted in the *Pattachitras* on cloth, interior wall paintings and in ritual murals. Specially in Ganjam district paintings of Kali can be seen in Osakothi festival. It is interesting to note that in a painting at Banesvaranasi, Kali stands on the bank of a river in the mountain landscape. She holds a scimitar and severed heads in her left hands while she displays *Varadamudra* in her right hand. Her uplifted right hand shows a trident. She is yellow coloured. Another interesting painting from the inner wall of the *Mandapa* of Raghunath Jew temple at Cuttack depicts Hanuman sacrificing Ahi Ravana, the son of Ravana born in Patala, before goddess Kali. Here she is depicted with her usual attributes. Besides these other paintings of Kali are noticed at Dadhivamana temple at Koilo near Salepur (Cuttack district), Paschimesvara temple at Talcher and in some temples at Puri.

Among the moving deities of Kali made of metal, mention may be made of an image in the Narayani temple at Paradipgarh. Another example of this type of image can be noticed in the Sambalpur University Museum. These images are either the above mentioned *Parsva-devatas* and presiding deities.

**Goddess Shyamakali at Puri**

Puri, the abode of Lord Jagannath, which is celebrated as a Vaisnava centre is also famous for its *Sakta* temples. Both inside and outside the premises of famous Jagannath temple there are several temples dedicated to *Sakta* divinities such as Vimala, Laksmi, Bhubanesvari, Harachandi, Daksina Kali, Shyamakali, etc. which indicates the popularity of Saktism at Puri. There is a temple dedicated to goddess Kali at Bali Sahi. Perhaps it is the earliest shrine where Kali (locally known as Shyamakali) is the presiding deity. The area where the temple is located is named as “Shyamakali Lane” after the name of the goddess. There is a good approach road to this temple which connects the major road (locally known as “Uansa danda”) which runs from Lion's gate to the sea.

From a text known as *Kali Archana Chandrika*, it is known that during the reign of Gajapati Kapilendra Dev, Shyamakali was worshipped under a Vakula tree. With the gradual march of time a secondary royal palace was built near that place by the Gajapati kings, of which little remains now. After Kapilendra Dev, his son Purusottama Dev became king. His *Rajaguru* Trilochana Dev and his wife Ratnavati were great devotees of Shyamakali. In the year 1599 A.D. Madhusingh, the brother of Mughal General Mansingh built the temple of Shyamakali. During the Muslim invasion all the royal ceremonies were observed in the temple of Shyamakali. Till 1599 A.D., all the rituals were performed according to the text *Durgotsava Chandrika*. But afterwards *Kali Archana Chandrika* gained importance in the rituals of Shyamakali. During the first quarter of 18th c.A.D. the *Rajaguru* of king Ramachandra Dev- II, Paramalaksami Rajaguru used to worship Shyamakali with tantric rituals. In the beginning of 19th c.A.D. the famous freedom fighter Jayi Rajaguru was also a great devotee of Shyamakali. Goddess Shyamakali is the tutelary deity of Gajapati kings. Till today, according to the royal custom, the new king after his coronation, first visits this temple and worship Kali. Now-a-days little remains of the said palace (earlier known as Puruna Nahara/Bali Nahara) are left. But other temples like Astasambhu and Radhakrishna alongwith Shyamakali temple stands testimony to the royal grandeur of the then age.

The iconography of Shyamakali confirms the *Dhyana* of Daksina Kali prescribed in the *Sastras*. Here Kali stands in *Pratyalidha* pose on the chest of Lord Siva and posseses four hands. She is engaged here in reverse
cohabitation with Lord Siva. She holds a sword and displays *Abhaya-mudra* in her upper left and right hands respectively while her lower left hand is holding a severed human head and the lower right displays *Varada-mudra*. In this context it is noteworthy that her benevolent aspect is attested by holding of the sword in her left hand. Because the sword in right hand symbolises destruction. She posseses three eyes and is surrounded by jackeles and vultures carved on the side. The height of the image is around four feet. From artistic point of view this image belongs to 15th c.A.D.

There are other two images installed on the left side of Shyamakali. These images are four-handed and known as Vimala and Sarbamangala. Same ascribe them as Chandika. Like the famous Vimala image of Jagannath temple, this icon of Vimala is seen standing and holding a noose, a human figure and a vase. Likewise the seated image of Mangala holds a full moon, rosary and lotus. The significant aspect of this image is that she holds a pestle in her upper left hand.

Thus it is inferred from the above discussion that Kali has occupied a prominent place in *Sakta* pantheon. But most of her images came into existance from 15th century onwards. Among the different forms of the Devi, the Daksina Kali aspect is the most popular both in texts and iconography. Most of the Kali images including Shyamakali image at Puri confirms the *Dhyana* of Daksina Kali. Being the tutelary deity of the Gajapati kings of Puri, Shyamakali ranked one among the famous goddesses of Puri. From iconographic point of view, her image is the only of its kind in entire Orissa.

References:

4. Das, op.cit, p.16.
5. Ibid.
7. Das, op.cit, p.18.
13. Ibid.
17. Donaldson, op.cit, p.539.
18. Ibid.
20. Ibid.